



Plunging Your Toilet

There's never a good time to have to plunge a toilet and clogs seem to happen at the most inopportune moments. Fortunately, you can clear most clogs yourself without calling for maintenance help. Follow these simple steps and you should have the problem cleared up before you have company over for dinner.

Flush only once.

If it's not flushing the first time, don't flush again. Multiple flushes will cause more water to be pumped into the toilet bowl. If the toilet becomes clogged the first flush will not cause the bowl to overflow but the second flush might.

Insert the plunger into the bowl and press down firmly *but slowly*.

Make sure you're covering the hole completely. The plunger should be submerged in water to be effective. It is important to be pushing and pulling with water, not air.

1. Make your first plunge a gentle one. Initially the bell is full of air. A hard thrust will force the air back around the seal and blow water all over the bathroom and you!

Once you force out the air, plunge vigorously in and out, maintaining the seal. You'll be forcing water both directions in the drain, which will effectively loosen most clogs. Stick with it, plunging 15 to 20 times if necessary.

2. Be patient. Try alternating between steady strokes and occasional monster heaves.
 3. Keep enough water in the bowl so the plunger stays covered. Trying to force air through the toilet trap won't generate much pressure..
- If the plunging eventually drains the bowl but the clog is still blocking a free flow down the drain, leave the plunger in the bowl and fill the bowl with water again. Fill it to the point it is normally after a regular flush. Then plunge again. Stubborn clogs might require you to do this a number of times.

Most of the time, this is all it takes to clear the clog





Tips

- **Bathroom Flooding? Stop the Flow of Water** to the bowl at any time! You can turn off the water valve to the toilet (usually located behind or to the side of the toilet) or you can open up the toilet tank and lift the float arm. When the float is lifted past a certain level, the water will stop. It will resume when you let go of the arm. If you shut the water valve off make sure to check that there isn't any water leaking from the valve when it's turned back on. If the water valve is leaking water, leave it off and call the office to submit a maintenance service request.
- **Constant Clogging**, try to figure out what clogged the toilet and prevent it from happening again. Common culprits are too much toilet paper, feminine products (some are flushable but most are not), toys (both kids and pets are suspects), cotton swabs, and baby wipes.
Consider having a little "what not to flush" presentation with your household in the best interest of your plumbing.
- **Clean up Diligently.** Disinfect the toilet bowl with a disinfectant cleaner after you've cleared the clog. Disinfect the plunger that you used; it can spread germs and start to stink if not properly cleaned. A used plunger may still have water inside of it after plunging. Keep it over the toilet, turn it a bit, and shake it slightly to drain it so it won't drip on the floor.
- **Still Clogged?** You may have a problem deeper in the plumbing lines, and you'll probably need to call for maintenance assistance.



Make sure the water supply to the toilet is off. It should be located right behind the toilet, the knob will turn all the way to the right to shut off. If the water is off to the toilet, this will prevent the bathroom from flooding.

